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Panel Creep: What Is It and How to Avoid It

By TMCnet Special Guest

[Jennifer Way](#), Marketing Manager, Interior Concepts

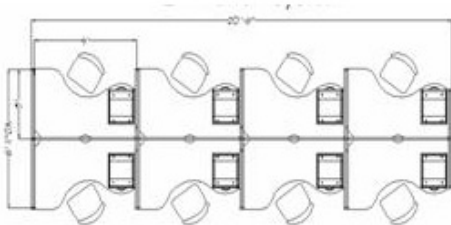
Panel creep may sound like an offensive term used to describe an annoying coworker, but the appropriate definition is unused space that accrues along a run of workstations multiplied by the total effect on the call center floor. As shown below, a run of eight workstations that are 3'x5' in dimension, constructed with 2" panels separating the workstations adds 5" of unused space that is being consumed by the panels for each run of workstations.

The unused space caused by panel creep can add up to hundreds of square footage of unusable space depending on the size of the floor plan. The best solution to maximize available space is to use a thin-line panel system. A thin-line system consists of a one-inch wide panel instead the typical 2" or 3" panel.

With a one-inch panel system, you may be able to expect additional stations within the floor plan, increased workspace or aisle space per employee, and/or the ability to build/lease less square footage; in any event, this positively impacts the bottom line.

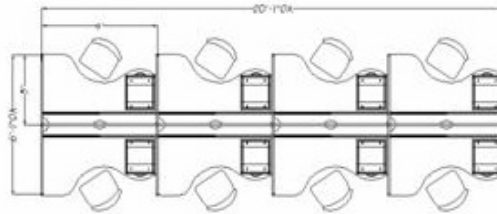
The illustrations and captions below illustrate the impact of a thicker 2" panel system versus a 1" panel system.

2-Inch Panel System



A run of 3'x5' stations with a 2" thick panel system is 20'6" long

1-Inch Panel System



A run of 3'x5' stations with a 1" thick panel system is 20'1" long

A sample floor plan featuring 270 workstations with a size of 3'x5' and 6' wide aisles will vary by the amount of space needed dependent on the furniture system. A furniture system with a 2" thick panel will consume approximately 10,925 square ft, while a furniture system with a 1" panel system will require approximately 10,602 square ft. That is over 300 square feet of space savings!

As shown in the illustration above, a 3'x5' agent workstation takes up 15 square feet of floor space. With over 300 square feet of unused space, a call center may be able to fit in 20 additional agents into the same amount of space!

This is especially valuable if the need should arise for more employees due to growth or seasonal work. The ability to fit more agents into a space will allow for expansion of the call center without the financial drain of opening a new and separate space. This will also keep the agents under the same supervision as the rest of the call center.

According to King White, founder of [Site Selection Group](#) a company that specializes in call center site selection across the world, the average price of commercial real estate is \$18-20 a square foot net, full service.

Based on these figures, let's look at the numbers for this floor plan. Opportunities for savings and revenue generation are shown.

Space Savings:

Utilizing a furniture system with a 1" thick panel saved approximately 300 square feet
300 square feet multiplied by approximately \$20/sq.ft. = \$6,000/month

\$6,000 x 12 months = \$72,000 annually

Depending on the industry, some agents have the ability to generate revenue for a call center. If this is the case, the ability to fit more agents into a given space will directly impact the revenue generation of the center.

Revenue Generation: CLIENT X could add 20 agents to current center
20 Agents multiplied by Monthly Agent Revenue = Additional \$\$
Additional \$\$ x 12 Months = \$\$\$\$

In summary, a furniture system with a 1" thin-line panel system is a benefit because it allows a company to fit more employees into the same space versus a 2-3" panel system. This can increase productivity, therefore increasing profitability. It also can save a call center the hassle and massive expenses that come with relocating their center in order to add more employees.

With the current market, call centers are more conscious of their space utilization, typically trying to use every square foot of space effectively. Money spent on unused floor space is money that can never be recovered. To avoid wasted space on the call center floor consider using a 1" panel system when the time comes for reconfiguring your space.

For more, be sure to check out the [Call Center Furniture channel on TMCnet](#).

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Edited by [Stefania Viscusi](#)

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